



County of Los Angeles
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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SACHI A. HAMAI
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors
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First District

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Second District

SHEILA KUEHL
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

September 2, 2015

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Sachi A. Hamai 
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Marcia Mayeda 
Director of Animal Care and Control

**REPORT BACK ON OUTCOME OF INVESTIGATION OF INSTAGRAM PHOTOS
(ITEM NO. 49-A, AGENDA OF AUGUST 11, 2015) AND REPORT BACK ON
COUNTY'S ANIMAL CARE CENTERS AND THE CARE (ITEM NO. 40-H, AGENDA
OF AUGUST 18, 2015)**

On August 11, 2015, a motion by Supervisors Antonovich and Solis directed the Interim Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Director of Animal Care and Control and the Department of Human Resources, to report to the Board on the outcome of the investigation regarding an employee who allegedly posted photographs of dead animals on his Instagram account, and a proposal to create a zero tolerance policy for employees found to commit animal cruelty.

On August 18, 2015, a motion by Supervisor Knabe directed the Interim Chief Executive Officer, in coordination with the Director of Animal Care and Control, to fully investigate complaints regarding the County's animal care centers and the care that is provided at these facilities. Further, the Board motion directed a specific action plan to improve the facilities and customer service, ensure accountability within the shelters, and that a system be immediately established allowing the public to provide feedback either by phone, online, in writing, or in person.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

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INSTAGRAM PHOTOS

The Department of Animal Care and Control (DACC) has completed its investigation regarding the incident in which a DACC employee allegedly posted graphic photos of animals on his Instagram account. DACC has been in consultation with the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and County Counsel, and will be pursuing corrective action. As this is a confidential personnel matter, DACC is prepared to brief your Board in Closed Session if requested.

DEPARTMENT POLICY REGARDING CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

DACC has completed a policy regarding employee standards of conduct regarding animal care. It is in the process of setting a meeting with SEIU to meet and confer regarding the policy prior to distribution to all staff.

KENNEL CLEANLINESS: DACC has reviewed the circumstances that led to the photographs of the dirty dog kennels at the Downey animal care center on August 5, 2015. There were several contributors to this situation:

1. Earlier this year, the Downey staff made a change to their staff schedule to accommodate customer service complaints regarding long waiting times in the late afternoon. This schedule change involved starting the animal care attendants' shifts later in the morning, so they would be on duty during the late afternoon to assist customers. At the time this change was made, the animal population in the care centers was at its seasonal low point and the schedule change did not have a negative impact. However, the summer's seasonal high point of animal population created additional animal care needs that could not be accommodated by this changed schedule. Therefore, the animal care staff was not able to clean the cages in time for public opening. DACC has corrected this by ordering a return to the previous staff schedule.
2. DACC is only staffed at 34 percent of the recommended animal care attendant staffing level to provide care for the animals. Other County animal care centers have been able to address this deficiency by using volunteers, CalWORKs workers, or even animal control officers to keep their kennels maintained. The Downey animal care center has been challenged by not having as many volunteers or CalWORKs workers as other care centers, and cannot spare any field officers to assist with kennel duties. DACC is addressing these shortfalls by enhancing its partnership with the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) to secure more CalWORKs workers. Additionally, DACC will be adding additional recruitments for community volunteers to assist with care center

operations. One way to ensure the success of recruiting and retaining a strong volunteer force is to add the staff position of Volunteer Coordinator. Animal care centers at Lancaster and Baldwin Park have such a position, and the benefits of having a staff member assigned to focus solely on this duty have been extremely beneficial. DACC will request the addition of a Volunteer Coordinator position for the Downey animal care center in the Supplemental Budget. Also, in response to the Board motion of June 22, 2015, the Chief Executive Office (CEO), in consultation with DACC, will identify funding during supplemental changes to ensure DACC's operational needs are addressed at their facilities and a staffing plan is developed.

3. The kennel facilities at the Downey animal care center are of poor quality and very difficult to maintain. DACC had requested replacement of these kennels, and your Board approved \$653,000 for this project for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-16. The kennel replacement project is underway and is being managed by the CEO's Capital Programs Division.

MEDICAL PROTOCOLS: DACC has implemented a number of animal population management improvements as recommended by ongoing and new research performed by the University of California-Davis School of Veterinary Medicine and others. These improved protocols have reduced animal disease and illness in the care centers and have made DACC an industry leader in managing animal health. DACC follows protocols recommended by the University of California-Davis School of Veterinary Medicine and the Association of Shelter Veterinarians.

All animals receive an initial health examination and vaccination against routine diseases. They are routinely treated for fleas and ticks, and dewormed as necessary. Animals are observed daily by medical staff during their medical rounds. All adopted animals receive an exit health exam. Medical staff closely monitors animal shelter population for potential disease outbreaks, biosecurity issues, and quarantine measures.

Animals receive treatment for any health concerns. If the illness or injury is urgent and there is no veterinarian on duty, or the medical issue requires additional medical resources, the care center staff will transport the animal to an emergency veterinary facility.

LIVE RELEASE RATE: DACC is an open admission animal care department. This means that DACC accepts all domestic animals regardless of their health or temperament. No pet is turned away even though it may not be ultimately adopted. Without DACC, many of these animals would be abandoned on the streets and subjected to illness, injury, or abuse.

Because DACC accepts all animals, some of these may have temperaments, illnesses, or injuries that make them unsuitable for adoption. DACC makes strong efforts to rehabilitate these animals through several programs subsidized by its nonprofit supporting organization, the Los Angeles County Animal Care Foundation. DACC also works closely with registered animal rescue groups known as Adoption Partners to rehabilitate and re-home animals not quite ready for adoption.

Additionally, DACC has partnered with the ASPCA and the Lange Foundation to implement the Safety Net program. These charitable organizations remedy problems that cause pet owners to consider relinquishing their pets, thereby reducing the number of unwanted animals impounded into County animal care centers. During its first year, the ASPCA was able to help more than 3,000 dogs and cats remain with their families.

Through the networking efforts of staff, volunteers, and adoption partners we have made tremendous progress in reducing the euthanasia of these dogs and cats. Dog euthanasia is at an all-time low of 23 percent, a significant reduction from the euthanasia rate of 70 percent in 2001.

Cat euthanasia has also decreased from 80 percent to 65 percent. The majority of cats euthanized are feral cats or unweaned kittens that are unable to survive. In order to increase the cat adoption rate, DACC applied for and was recently awarded a grant of \$500,000 from the ASPCA to subsidize cat adoptions with the hope that more people will come to an animal care center to adopt a cat.

DACC continues to seek creative means of finding new, loving homes for the animals in its care and works with more than 200 animal rescue groups and animal transport specialists to re-home our animals in need.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPROVE FACILITIES

DACC and the CEO are pursuing both short-term and long-term strategies to improve the animal care centers. Your Board approved \$4 million for facility repairs for FY 2015-16. These repairs will improve the care of the animals and safety for the customers. A summary of these repairs is found on Attachment A.

Additionally, DACC, in collaboration with the Department of Regional Planning (DRP), has already completed a GIS study of its service areas to identify ideal locations for siting replacement animal care centers. DACC and the Department of Public Works (DPW) are working with consultants to establish the space needs and operational and functional requirements for the new prototypical animal care centers. Based on this information, the consultant has developed conceptual layouts for the generic indoor and outdoor animal care centers, which have been reviewed and approved in concept by DPW and DACC, and the consultant is now in the process of developing the conceptual plans for the facilities.

Further, DPW and DACC have worked with the consultant to develop a comprehensive staffing organization chart that identifies all the current and projected staffing positions for DACC that will be housed at the new administration headquarters. DPW and DACC are now working with the consultant to establish the space need, operational, and functional requirements for development of the conceptual layouts.

The extensive efforts by DACC, DRP, and DPW will create a Master Plan that will guide DACC's strategy for replacement or improvement of facilities for the next 25 years. DACC will present the prototypes, conceptual plans, staffing models, and funding recommendations, in the Master Plan to the CEO for concurrence, and submit to the Board for approval later this year.

Based on the information compiled above, the consultant will begin developing renovation programs for the existing Lancaster and Carson/Gardena animal care centers. The architectural programming phase is estimated to be completed on schedule by the end of November 2015.

ACTION PLAN TO FOR PUBLIC FEEDBACK

DACC has an existing customer service feedback program by which customers may make telephone complaints by calling (800) 253-3555; by email at animalinfo@animalcare.lacounty.gov; in writing by mailing a complaint to DACC's administrative headquarters; and by having care center command staff on duty to address complaints in person. DACC has placed signs at each care center advising all patrons of these available resources.

Additionally, DACC has purchased an online customer service survey instrument, which will be implemented by September 15, 2015. This survey instrument will allow DACC to gather regular feedback to address any deficiencies that may be identified.

ASSURING ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN THE CARE CENTERS

DACC is developing several accountability measures to address concerns of animal caretaking and customer service. DACC will begin using its animal facility inspectors, coupled with a representative from DACC's medical team, to conduct unannounced inspections of each animal care facility. These inspections will occur at quarterly intervals, be unannounced, and the reports will be submitted directly to the Director of Animal Care and Control. The inspections will review all animal husbandry matters including cleanliness and sanitation; feeding, watering and nutrition; facility structures; and safety.

This fiscal year, if carryover funding is approved, DACC will install security cameras and a Wi-Fi system at the Downey animal care center. The cameras will help to monitor and record care center activity, and expand the ability to confirm events such as cleanliness, accidents, or thefts. The Wi-Fi system will allow care center staff to use mobile devices to record animal health and well-being in the kennels and enable visitors to access information about the animals they see. Both enhancements will improve department operations and customer service. DACC is waiting for a final decision regarding the use of carryover revenue to fund these projects.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Tom Tindall at (213) 893-2374, or via email at ttindall@ceo.lacounty.gov or Marcia Mayeda at (562) 728-4610, or via email at mmayeda@animalcare.lacounty.gov.

SAH:TT:MM:os

Attachment (1)

- c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
- County Counsel
- Department of Public Social Services
- Department of Public Works
- Department of Regional Planning

Department of Animal Care and Control Maintenance Request
15-16 Final Changes

LOCATION	Operations Maintenance	Extraordinary Maintenance	PROJECT	
AGOURA-1		\$ 67,000	Repair concrete in kennel runs. Paint with epoxy on walls and floors.	
AGOURA-2		\$ 26,000	Replace metal support beams in Kennel Building.	
AGOURA-6		\$ 89,000	Repair uneven concrete around Administration Building.	
AGOURA-10		\$ 48,000	Install Swamp Coolers	
		\$ 173,000	Improvements for Electrical, Wood framing, HVAC	
	\$ -	\$ 403,000		SUBTOTAL
BALDWIN PARK-1		\$ 707,000	Replace kennel wire mesh.	
BALDWIN PARK-4	\$ 475,000		Paint interior and exterior of buildings.	
BALDWIN PARK-6	\$ 30,000		Replace and Reconfigure Counter	
		\$ 18,500	Improvements for Electrical, Lighting	
	\$ 505,000	\$ 725,500		SUBTOTAL
CARSON-1		\$ 26,700	Repair kennel plumbing and replace sump basket.	
CARSON-3		\$ 25,000	Replace hot water boiler at Care Center. (Temp. unit rental)	
CARSON-5	\$ 65,000		Replace front counter.	
CARSON-6		\$ 27,000	Repair uneven concrete sidewalks around the Administration Building.	
CARSON-8		\$ 270,000	Euthanasia Room	
		\$ 565,767	Improvements for Lighting, HVAC, Roof, Electrical	
	\$ 65,000	\$ 914,467		SUBTOTAL
CASTAIC		\$ 173,000	Improvements for Lighting, Electrical, Roof	
	\$ -	\$ 173,000		SUBTOTAL
DOWNEY-2		\$ 491,033	Replace mason kennels with shoreline in Buildings 4, 5, and 6.	
DOWNEY-3		\$ 40,000	Replace the water valves used to provide water to the dogs.	
DOWNEY-4		\$ 17,000	Install air conditioner in Cat Room.	
DOWNEY-9		\$ 79,000	Surgical Suite Upgrade	
		\$ 26,000	Improvements to Electrical, Plumbing, and slip resistant flooring	
		\$ 653,033		SUBTOTAL
LANCASTER-5		\$ 66,000	Repair Kennel plumbing and replace sump baskets.	
LANCASTER-9		\$ 209,000	Construct new pig pen with lighting and plumbing. Small livestock area near old grooming trailer needs to be torn down and rebuilt with plumbing and lighting. Replace old horse shelter. Replace Chicken Coop and add lighting. Repair/replace fencing.	
LANCASTER-10		\$ 26,000	Add lighting to Barn Yard areas.	
		\$ 260,000	Improvements to HVAC, Lighting, Electrical	
	\$ -	\$ 561,000		SUBTOTAL
	\$ 570,000	\$ 3,430,000		TOTAL: \$4,000,000